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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains 56 strategies for increasing student participation in educational programs not traditional for their gender. Strategies for recruitment are as follows: prepare useful program information, demonstrate interest in serving nontraditional students, work with feeder schools and the community, and work with other agencies serving the student population. Retention suggestions include evaluating materials, sensitizing staff, conducting needs assessments, and providing facilitative services. Job placement activities include the following: working with employers, conducting job preparation workshops, helping students with information gathering and job search plans, and offering internship programs. Suggestions for partnerships with businesses are as follows: inviting their presentations in class or sponsorship of school events and arranging tours and experiential learning opportunities. Other strategies include organizing a formal advocacy group, establishing on-campus groups of students and faculty in programs not traditional for their gender, and organizing a mentoring program. (KC)

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Strategies for Increased Participation of Students in Programs Not Traditional for Their Gender

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FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN PROGRAMS NOT TRADITIONAL FOR THEIR GENDER

RECRUITMENT

Prepare useful information about programs.

- Prepare brochures, flyers, or bookmarks that explain programs and means for admission. Make written materials brief, easy to read, useful, and attractive. Use examples of the minority gender in programs.

- Prepare a video about the campus and its programs. Show the admissions process, key programs of interest, and student activities. Feature at least one quick access to admissions and other information.

- Prepare a video on specific programs for interested persons. Give more detailed information about the program setting, activities and future employment possibilities. Feature nontraditional students.

Demonstrate the school's interest in serving nontraditional students.

- Prepare feature stories about successful students and school events for free media coverage, especially in newspapers, church and other newsletters, and radio and television talk shows. Feature stories in programs that are not traditional for their gender.

- Give presentations to civic, church, and business groups related to the school's offerings for nontraditional students. Feature students in programs that are not traditional for their gender.

- Organize sessions for delivery in communities with concentrations of disadvantaged persons. Provide skills development, career planning, job preparations and placement. Tar-

get single parents, homemakers, and others for training in industry-related programs, as a means for economic self-sufficiency.

Work with feeder schools and the community.

- Ask counselors and department leaders at feeder schools to allow you to make a presentation at their next meeting. Introduce to them forms of unnecessary bias and stereotypes in occupations and your school's interest in enrolling students of each gender in your programs. Give them materials they can use to attract students to your programs.

- Ask a key person from each feeder school to be your liaison with other staff. Share sex equity information, guidelines, and program information for their use and dissemination to others.

- Arrange a tour of your campus for counselors, administrators, and key teachers. Sell your programs and the impact they can have in the employability of their students.

- Job fairs, career days, and open houses for prospective students and parents can be held to increase understanding of your programs and to make admissions easier.

Work with other agencies serving prospective student populations.

Have cooperative arrangements for referral and services with JTPA, Project Independence, AFDC, and other groups in the community.

RETENTION

- Evaluate and improve language, books, materials, displays, and activities to insure sex fairness.

- Sensitize school personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators, staff) to issues of sex bias and stereotype.

- Conduct a needs assessment for each nontraditional student. Identify deficiencies and other needs

  – in life skills, such as management of time, stress, and financial resources, and presentation of self,

  – in learning skills, such as listening, reading, problem-solving, critical thinking, study strategies,

  – in vocational skills and background.

- Help students resolve financial and other arrangements needed for continued enrollment.

- Focus on students' strengths and guide them toward realistic career goals.

- Prepare an individualized career plan that includes skills remediation, the academic program, and other job preparation strategies.

- Upon the student's arrival, provide welcoming and orientation activities directed toward facilitating entry for nontraditional students.

- Offer tutoring for students with skills deficiencies.

- Facilitate successful student experiences, from the start, to maintain and build motivation.

- Provide a setting that encourages interaction with students and faculty, especially those with others who are in programs not traditional for their gender.

- Facilitate students' building informal support systems with other students, such as brown-bag lunch groups, team projects, or school organizations.

- Begin a support group of nontraditional students in which common issues, barriers, and strategies can be discussed.

- Assist students in identifying an on-campus mentor, such as an advanced student or a faculty member, and an off-campus mentor, such as a relative or other person employed in a field not traditional for their gender.

- Monitor student participation: attendance, classroom efforts and achievements, home adjustments, etc.

- Accent successful endeavors of students in feature stories, presentations, displays.

PLACEMENT

- Work with employers to support positive perspectives of students in programs not traditional for their gender. (For example, accent successes of students and use gender-fair language in discussions of hiring.)

- Invite employers to make presentations to classes and to participate in school activities. Arrange for students in programs not traditional for their gender to take part in hosting employers, assisting them in finding meeting rooms, preparing displays, etc.

- Invite successful nontraditional, former students to share their career histories, including features that contribute to success and advancement.

- Lead students in identifying prospective employers, contributing to the program's list of employers.

- Facilitate students' collection of information about employers—types of products and services, managerial framework, number of work sites, interrelationships with other industries, etc.

- Promote curricula that build student knowledge of all aspects of the industry.

- Conduct job preparation workshops. Include
  - application procedures
  - resume writing
  - interviewing skills
  - work-home adjustment plans
  - job advancement strategies.

- Include entrepreneurship and self-employment among job planning considerations.
- Guide students into formulation of a job search plan.
- Invite employers to pose problems encountered in the work setting to initiate units of instruction.
- Begin an internship or "shadowing" program to introduce students to employers and work environments.
- Plan summer or other short workshops conducted in an employer's setting, whereby students engage in problem-solving activities of the organization.
- Increase students' exposures to work settings by planning ways to share information. Students may be asked to document their on-the-job observations and experiences for later synthesis and sharing with classmates. Documentations can be in the form of daily journals, photographs, or taped video. These can be assimilated into a presentation: oral or written report, bulletin board exhibit, film exposition of occupations, or other form.

PLACEMENT

PARTNERSHIPS

- Invite employed persons to make classroom or school presentations. As much as possible, invite persons who are employed in occupations not traditional for their gender. These may serve to:
  - Explain the kinds of jobs available in their fields, including educational requirements.
  - Explain how their fields utilize mathematics, sciences, and other learning.
  - Lead the class in work-related problem-solving activities that may initiate units of instruction.
  - Explain their own career histories: how their careers evolved, how they arrived to their present positions, what barriers they experienced and how these were overcome.
  - Display and provide occupational information at career or job fairs.
  - Provide suggestions for job seeking, interviews, adjustment to employment, advancement, and other topics related to placement.
- Ask business, industry, and other organizations to co-sponsor school activities or events. Supports can be in the forms of expertise, encouragement, role models, finances, and others.
- Utilize corporate sponsors to film a video addressing academic and employment challenges.
- Assign students (including the minority gender in an occupation) to maintain contacts with the organization (writing letters, hosting company representatives in school visits, assisting in setting up displays, etc.).

- Arrange tours of various occupational sites for student understanding of the whole spectrum of an organization, how it achieves its mission, and Awareness of nontraditional occupation/gender roles.
  - Request of the tour guide, when possible, attention to persons employed in positions not traditional for their gender.
  - Assign each student to prepare a brief report of a facet of the organization; include assignments of male-dominated roles to female students and female-dominated roles to male students.
  - In follow-up discussions of tours, focus on examples of nontraditional, as well as, traditional occupation/gender roles.

- Arrange, with employers from various occupational fields, on-site opportunities for student experiential learning. (As much as possible, match students also to occupations not traditional for their gender.) Activities may vary in length and degree of exposure, such as the following:
  - After-School Programs, such as a one-month assignment consisting of four hours per week after school or on Saturdays.
  - Summer or Holiday Institutes—A one or two week assignment consisting of employer instruction for a group of approximately 25 students. Instruction may focus on computer or other skills that are vital to the organization.
  - Internships—Paid or unpaid work experiences in some position of the organization. As well as internships for an academic term, summer or holiday internships may be considered.

PARTNERSHIPS

ADVOCATES AND MENTORS

Organize a formal group to serve an advisory or advocacy purpose.

- Community members, representative of various groups and occupational areas and sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students, may be formed into an advisory or advocacy committee.

- The group may serve to identify areas of the campus contributing to bias and stereotyping and to recommend improvements for equity purposes.

- Additionally, among other functions, the group may assist in identifying prospective students interested in nontraditional programs, provide information about student and community needs, recommend strategies for increased program completion and placement of nontraditional students, assist in evaluation, and recommend sources of funding.

- Members can be invited to make presentations to classes and to assist at various events related to supporting students in programs that are not traditional for their gender.

Organize on-campus groups of students and faculty in programs not traditional for their gender.

- Ask advanced nontraditional students to participate in activities to welcome and support beginning students, such as serving on a welcome committee during admissions periods.

- Ask students to serve on school committees or councils for attracting students and on welcome committees during key admission periods.

- Encourage their participation in job fairs, career day activities, off-campus admissions booths, and information sessions.

Organize a mentoring program.

- Help students to identify a role model, preferably a person of the same gender, with a similar background, and employed in the student's intended career field. This person could be a relative, member of the community, employee, advanced student, faculty member, etc.

- Provide information that defines mentoring and suggests strategies and topics for networking. Mentoring sessions can consist of discussions about student goals and plans, joint work-related projects, and other activities.

- Monitor mentoring contacts to insure their effectiveness in student development.

- Arrange for recognition of excellence in mentoring.

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